Performance of farm sector

2879. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the farm sector could not perform well during the Ninth and Tenth Five Year Plans;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government propose to pay more attention to the growth of farm sector and the measures proposed to be adopted to achieve better performance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) During the Ninth Plan Period (1997-2002), the average annual growth rate of farm sector *(i.e.* agriculture including allied sectors of forestry, logging and fishing) was 2.1 per cent as against the targeted growth rate of 3.9 per cent and during the first four years of Tenth Plan Period *(i.e.* 2002-06), the average annual growth rate was 1.8 per cent as against the targeted growth rate of 4.0 per cent. The performance of the farm sector fell short of targeted growth during the Ninth Plan and the first four years of Tenth Plan (2002—06) largely due to weather related conditions. Since only about 40 per cent of the net sown area in the country is under assured irrigation, the capacity of agriculture to withstand such shocks gets eroded.

(c) A series of initiatives through various schemes have been taken by the Government in the areas of irrigation expansion through Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme, increased credit coverage by enhancing institutional credit flow with the reduced interest rate of 7 per cent, crop diversification, dryland farming, marketing infrastructure, agricultural insurance against production loss, horticulture, extension services and storage facilities. The process of growth is strengthened through farm mechanization, agri-clinics and agri-business centres.

Further, the schemes for rice, wheat and coarse cereals are under implementation to augment their production and productivity under macro-management mode of agriculture in which States have been given the flexibility to choose any scheme or its components according to their specific needs. These 31 initiatives are expected to accelerate growth and productivity and achieve better performance both in cereal and non-cereal crops.